



NEWS RELEASE – Tuesday 6 November 2012

Donation keeps railway project on track

A project to renovate a coach by a heritage railway group has been boosted by a grant from local company The Hills Group.

Hills has committed a further £6,000 towards Swindon & Cricklade Railway on top of £21,000 already given. The money has been made available through the Landfill Communities Fund which is administered for Hills by Community First, the Rural Community Council for Wiltshire.

The Swindon & Cricklade Railway is Wiltshire's only standard gauge railway and run by volunteer enthusiasts. It now runs for 3 miles between Swindon (Moulden Hill) and near Cricklade (Hayes Knoll) with plans to extend the line further.

Mike Hill, chief executive of The Hills Group, said: "We have long supported the work of the Swindon & Cricklade Railway which not only provides a marvellous facility for local people and visitors but maintains a piece of heritage which would otherwise be lost.

"The renovation project will provide them with much needed extra resources but they have been hampered by poor weather, a daunting set of repairs and marshalling the volunteers.

"We're happy to help to make sure all the hard work put in so far is not lost. I certainly look forward to riding in it once all the repairs are complete."

In 2009 Hills donated £21,000 to help convert a 1959 corridor coach into an open and integrated vehicle with full wheelchair access including an onboard disabled toilet. It was badly damaged by rust and work repairing it was delayed by two ferocious winters and the loss of a volunteer.

It meant that work has not been completed as soon as hoped but that it is planned to be completed by Easter 2013. The coach will then be fully accessible.

To ensure the volunteers can complete the work and bring the coach into use Hills agreed a further grant of £6,000.

Brian Pound (Chairman of Swindon & Cricklade Railway) said: "Having the use of this coach will be a great asset to the Railway as it means wheelchair users can ride in the same carriage as non wheelchair users and in a much more comfortable manner."

ENDS



Left to right : Mick Hicks, Project Leader, Mike Hill, chief executive of The Hills Group, Chris Palmer – Deputy Project Leader, Brian Pound, chairman of Swindon & Cricklade Railway, Mary Hardwidge, grants officer Community First



The inside of the carriage which is nearing completion

Notes to editors:

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